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ABSTRACT

This practicum involved parents in academic workshops and home visits to help parents learn how to assist their children with school work and assignments. Workshops were set up to teach parents how to: (1) communicate with teachers; (2) help their children with reading and mathematics homework and skills; (3) set up study programs for their children; and (4) encourage their children to use libraries. Eleven families were selected for home visits, which included family discussions about children's home and school activities, and homework assistance. The writer also produced a newsletter, appeared in a television program, and arranged meetings with community college and school district staff members to discuss parent involvement. Results showed that children whose parents worked with them began to follow study schedules and to improve their behavior and their schoolwork. All objectives were reached except an increase in children's use of libraries. (SH)

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Increasing Parent Participation in the Education of Their Children in Grades K through Nine Through Workshops and Home Visits

by

Louis A. DeFreitas, SR.

Cluster XXVI A

A Practicum II Report Presented to the Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education.

Nova University
1991

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Approved:

8-8-91
Date of Final Approval of Report

Georgianna Lowen (GL)
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

page

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....iii

LIST OF TABLES.....iv

ABSTRACT.....v

Chapter

I. INTRODUCTION.....1

Description of Community.....1
Writer's Work Setting and Role.....5

II. STUDY OF THE PROBLEM.....6

Problem Description.....6
Problem Documentation.....10
Causative Anlysis.....13
The Related Literature.....16

III. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTUMENTS.....23

Statement of General Goals.....23
Behavioral Expectations..... 23
Evaluation Instruments.....24

VI. SOLUTION STRATEGY..... .26

Discussion and Evaluation of Solution.....26
Description and Selected Solution.....27
Report of Action Taken.....35

V. RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....50

REFERENCES.....62

Appendices

A. QUESTIONS TO TEACHERS TO DOCUMENT PROBLEMS.....66

B. QUESTIONS TO PARENTS TO DOCUMENT PROBLEMS.....68

C. QUESTIONS TO PARENTS TO CHECK RELEVENCE OF COMMUNICATION WORKSHOPS.....70

D. QUESTIONS TO PARENTS TO CHECK RELEVENCE OF READING WORKSHOPS.....72

E. QUESTIONS TO PARENTS TO CHECK RELEVENCE OF MATHEMATICS WORKSHOPS.....74

F. QUESTIONS TO PARENTS TO CHECK RELEVENCE OF PARENT/TEACHER CONTACTS.....76

G CHECK LISTS FOR PARENTS.....78

H. WORKSHOP AGENDA FOR BETTER COMMUNICATIONS WITH TEACHERS.....82

I. AGENDA FOR READING WORKSHOP.....85

J. AGENDA FOR MATHEMATICS WORKSHOP.....88

LIST OF TABLES

Table | Page

1. Responses From Teachers To Document Problem.....10

2. Responses From Parents To Document Problem.....12

3. Responses From Parents at Teacher Communication Workshops.....51

4 Responses From Parents at Reading Workshops.....53

5 Responses From Parents at Mathematics Workshops.....55

ABSTRACT

Increasing Parent Participation in the Education of Their Children in Grades K Through Nine Through Workshops and Home Visits. DeFreitas, Louis A.,1991: Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood. Descriptors: Community Control of Schools/Parent Involvement in Schools/Mathematics Workshops/Reading Workshops/Parenting

The practicum tried to get parents involved in academic workshops so that they could learn how to help their children with their school work. It also required the writer to work with parents in their homes, demonstrating how they could be of help to their children.

The writer organized some of the workshops, and volunteered to speak at parent groups that were already organized. From these groups, he selected eleven families to work with as individual units.

The writer's goals were: (a) to get 75 parents to workshops to help them learn how to better communicate with the teachers of their children; (b) to get 75 parents to workshops to help them learn how to better help their children so that they could improve their reading skills; (c) to get 75 parents to workshops to help them learn how to better help their children so that they could improve their mathematics skills; (d) to get 20 parents to regularly contact the teachers of their children; (e) to get 20 to encourage their children to use the public libraries; (f) to get 20 parent to set up study programs for their children; and (g) to get 20 parents to work with their children to help them master the number facts and the multiplication tables. The writer reached all his goals except goal (e).

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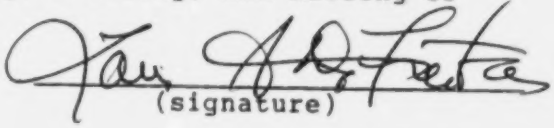
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

The section of the borough in which the writer worked was in an Afro-American community in a city in the northeastern part of the United States. Many residents of the section lived in private homes, which were called brownstones. A small percentage of the section's population lived in privately owned apartment buildings, and a large percentage of the area's residents lived in public housing projects. The two armories in the area housed homeless young men, and there existed a number of housing developments for senior citizens.

Few large businesses functioned in the area, and many of the former smaller businesses had moved to safer parts of the city. The churches in the area served people from most of the different denominations. The number of public and private health facilities for the citizens of this section of the city were not sufficient for the huge population.

During the past year, there had been an increase in the crime rate in the entire city, with a large increase in the crime rate within the borough where the writer's practicum took place. In the past, there had been shootings in and near many of the public housing developments in the area.

There had been many very young children killed by stray bullets from shootouts between young adults. Drug and alcohol use rose among the students and among many of the very young parents. The police leadership in the city had publicly stated that in many areas of the city crime had gotten out of control.

During the period of this practicum, there were a number of grocery store holdups in the areas where the writer was working with parents. In most instances, the robbers killed or attemtpted to kill everyone in the stores being robbed. These robberies and murders made the writer and the people that he worked with very concerned about being out after dark.

There were many middle income families living in the area, but few had children going to the public schools of the school districts in this section of the borough. Many of the middle income parents sent their children to public schools in other sections of the borough, while others sent their children to private schools. There were a number of private and church run schools in the section of the borough where the writer worked. Over 80 percent of the children in the school districts in the area where the writer lived and worked qualified for free lunch.

All the community school districts in the area had a number of similar elements. They had nine member school boards, whose members were elected to three year terms at community school board elections. The community

superintendents of the districts, who were hired by contract by the members of the school boards, were the highest educational administrators in the districts. On the recommendations of the community superintendents, the members of the community school boards had the authority to hire all administrators and paraprofessionals for the schools in their districts. Teachers were hired by the Central Board of Education and then were assigned to school districts. The student and faculty populations of the districts were close in size.

The writer's district contains 13 elementary and three middle schools, each with a principal. About 20 assistant principals served in the schools. The district also employed about 725 teachers and about 300 other employees. For the next school year, because of citywide budget cuts, district leaders expected to have fewer employees. The leaders predicted that cuts in teaching personnel would force them to increase the size of classes.

There was a high school in the district, which did not come under the control of the community school board. It was under the authority of the Central Board of Education. Many of the students in the district attended the local high school after graduating from the middle schools in the school district.

The school district's boundaries connected to the boundaries of the four other community school districts in this section of the borough. Some of the students in the

district where the writer worked were assigned to middle schools in the other school districts after graduating from elementary school. It was not unusual for parents to have children in more than one school district.

The school district's boundaries also crossed a number of political districts. Thus, it was represented by two congressmen, two state senators, two assemblymen, and two city councilpeople. These politicians, when active in educational affairs, were very helpful in getting extra funds into the school district. Since the politicians represented many school districts, they were also of help to those school districts, within their political districts, that wanted to run joint programs.

At the Central Board of Education there were seven members who were appointed to their positions for a four year term by elected politicians. Two were appointed by the mayor, and the others were appointed by the five borough presidents. During the period of this practicum, one of the mayor's appointees resigned. She had been the first black president of the Central Board of Education. She was replaced by a black male. He was the only black male on the board, and he was elected by the other members to be its president. The Central Board of Education hired, by contract, the chancellor to implement its policy decisions. The chancellor's primary responsibility was the running of the high schools in the city. He was also responsibile for monitoring the city's 32 community school

districts to insure that elementary and middle school students were receiving a quality education. The chancellor had the power to suspend community school boards for violating rules, regulations, or laws. During the period of this practicum, the chancellor forced one of the school boards, in another borough, to fire its community superintendent.

There were about 70,000 teachers, 4,000 educational administrators, and about 15,000 other employees in the entire city school system. Each of the community school districts had a community school board and a community superintendent.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The writer was an elementary school teacher in one of the school districts. He was a former assistant principal, and a former community school superintendent. He had earned a bachelor's degree in business administration and a master's degree in education. He had taught in the city's school system for almost 20 years. He had also taught five years in another city. The writer wrote opinion pieces for one of the local newspapers; and his responses to the articles of others were printed in three of the major newspapers in the city.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The problem was that there was a need for parents to daily interact with their children concerning their school activities. Most of the parents did not question their children as to what they were doing academically in school. They did not find out what their children were expected to learn or what their children were studying. They just knew the general names of the subjects that their children had taken, but knew very little of the content studied. For example, they knew that their children had taken mathematics, but they did not know when their children had studied how to multiply common fractions.

Most of the parents did not know how their children had done socially in school. They did not question their children concerning their friends in school. By not knowing how their children had developed socially in school, they often did not realize that their children had learned different social values. These values differed from the values that they understood and appreciated. Usually, conflicts had been created because of the differences of values between the parents and their children. Had the parents better understood the differences, they would have been better able

to help their children.

Very few of the parents in the districts questioned their children concerning their teachers. From grades K through Six, students spent most of the school day with one teacher. The teachers in these early grades had a tremendous influence on the children in their classes. The parents should have had a better sense of what their children were thinking. In order for parents to have better understood the lives their children led in school, they needed to have understood what their children truly thought of their teachers and of their school's environment.

Also, to have better understood the relationships that existed between their children and their children's teachers, parents should have had regular contact with the teachers. Unfortunately, in the district where the writer worked this had not happened. When parents had been in regular contact with the teachers of their children, they had become directly involved in the education process that helped to determine if their children would complete high school.

Parents initially involved themselves in the academic work of their children by making sure that their children completed their homework assignments. This was done by a small number parents in the district. From the writer's experiences, he had found that parents usually inquired about their children's homework assignments after their children had had trouble in school. The policy of the school districts in the area was that children were supposed to have been

given at least two homework assignments each night. Many parents stated that their children often claimed that they did not get homework assignments, or that they had done their homework assignments in school. When faced with this charge, the writer answered by showing parents his grading book, which listed how many assignments had been completed, and by showing them the work of students who had completed all assignments. He then told the parents that when their children accused him of not giving homework assignments, they should get in touch with the principal of the school to see if their children had gotten work to complete at home. By contacting the school's administrative staff when checking on their children's progress, the parents would have been helping in the evaluation of teachers.

Only a small number of students in the district had been encouraged by their parents to study for long periods. Even with most of the students who had regularly completed their homework assignments, the writer found that they had not been encouraged to do additional academic work. Most of the parents had not required their children to use the libraries within their school districts. Most of the children had opportunities to use the libraries as places to study and as places to obtain additional study materials.

Since the citywide reading and mathematics examinations were scored on a percentile basis, it was important for parents to have understood that their children were competing with all the children of the city on the same grade

levels to be in the higher percentile ranks. And, that reaching this goal usually had been achieved by those students who studied, each day, for long periods of time.

Parents could also have kept in contact with their children's teachers by sending notes to school to explain why their children had been absent. This had only been done by a small percentage of the parents. During the last school year, the writer had received letters to explain the absences of their children from only four parents of his 25 students.

Another part of the problem was that less than 10 percent of the parents in the district had attended parent association meetings, and an even smaller number of parents had attended school board meetings. At the writer's school there had been over 700 students, and less than 40 parents regularly attended parent association meetings. Only about 30 percent of the parents attended the two afternoon and two night meetings where they spoke to their children's teachers and received their children's report cards.

No more than 30 parents usually attended monthly school board meetings, where they could have had input in creating school district policy. Last year, at a meeting where the community superintendent was hired, less than 25 people attended. Most of the people who attended were staff members and family members of the superintendent.

There was a serious need for parents in the district to become involved in the education process. They could have

best involved themselves by daily interacting with their children, concerning their children's social and school activities. The ideal situation would have parents interacting with their children by knowing what they were taught in school, by helping them with their school assignments, and by encouraging them to use the neighborhood and school libraries.

Problem Documentation

The writer gave out a questionnaire to 30 teachers (see Appendix A). A table of results follows.

Table 1
Responses From Teachers to Document Problem

Questions	Responses YES	NO
1. Do most students complete homework?	13	17
2. Did most students pass mathematics test?	3	27
3. Did most students pass reading test?	5	25
4. Do most parents help students with school work?	3	27
5. Do you want parents to help students?	28	2
6. Do you want an academic atmosphere at home of students?	30	0
7. Do you want parents to attend reading workshop?	30	0
8. Do you want parents to attend math workshop?	30	0
9. Are you aware of opportunities for students?	6	24
10. Do you want a monthly newspaper?	30	0

The writer interviewed the then vice-chairperson on one of the community school board and she stated that she believed that parents should be taught how to help their children with their homework. She had been a school board member for over ten years, and she had learned from her experiences that when parents were able to help their children with their school work, the children did well in school. She also stated that parents should work with the parent associations in their children's schools and that they should attend the monthly school board meetings. She believed that by involving themselves in parent associations, and by attending school board meetings, parents would be better able to help their children, help the teachers of their children, and help the school board members of their districts.

The writer was asked by the then chairperson of the same community school board if he would work with parent leaders in the district to help them become more involved in the schools and in school district affairs. She stated that when she was a parent, active in the parent association at her children's school, it was the educators in the school who taught her how to understand the dynamics of the school system. She wanted the writer to advise the parents who sent their children to the schools in her district. She also stated that since many of the parents were very young and without much formal education, they needed help in learning how to help their children with their academic work.

The writer gave out a questionnaire to 25 parents (Appendix B). A table of results follows.

Table 2

Response From Parents to Document Problem

Questions	Responses	
	YES	NO
1. Do you know principal's philosohy?	2	23
2. Did you read the educational plan?	0	25
3. Did you know teacher's objectives?	4	21
4. Does your child get homework daily?	12	13
5. Do you need to learn how to help child?	22	3
6. Would you attend workshops?	22	3
7. Do you want workshops on Saturday?	20	5
8. Do you want a newspaper?	25	0
9. Would you help with a newspaper?	4	21

A teacher in charge of one of the teachers' centers, in one of the school districts, was interviewed by the writer. She stated that many of the teachers who came to her center constantly expressed their concerns of the lack of help that their students had been able to get after school hours. Many of the teachers had suggested to her that there should be places where parents could go to learn how to help their children with their school assignments. She also stated that as a parent she had found that when she had helped her son with his schoolwork, he had done better in school and they had done better as a family.

The new chancellor of the city school system wanted schools reformed in a manner that would allow parents

and teachers to have major input into the running of their individual schools. He had gotten the personnel of over 100 schools in the city to test his concept of having parents and teachers help run schools. The school personnel at the school where the writer worked tried to become part of the chancellor's reform program. Their application was still pending at the end of this practicum.

The president of the community college in the district stated that he beleived that parents and community people had to be involved in working with the children of the communities. He believed that children could be taught after school by volunteers who were interested in helping to build their communities. It had been his experience that when parents and community residents worked with their children and the children of their communities, the children did well academically. He stated that he would work with the writer in his testing of the concept of parents and community people volunteering to help children after school hours.

There had been many newspaper articles and editorials concerned with reforming the system so that parents and teachers would have greater input into running the schools in which they were involved. The articles and editorials showed that the reporters and editorial writers had been enthusiastic with the chancellor's plan for school reform.

Causative Analysis

There was too much distrust between teachers and parents. Too many parents did not understand the

difficulties in teaching large classes. When teachers made constructive comments concerning why many students were not reaching their potential, many parents became too defensive. Also, there were too many teachers who believed the negative stereotypes about financially poor black children. These misunderstandings often led to conflicts.

The previous educational leader of the district, in which the writer worked, did not work well with the parent association leaders or with most of the school board members. Because she had many conflicts with these two groups, over a period of two years, most people in the district did not feel obligated to cooperate with each other. The superintendent who replaced her had to try to lift the spirits of the people in the school district, while trying to get better academic results with less funds from the city and the state. The superintendents in the other districts were also having serious problems because of budget cuts.

The educational leaders in the schools did not involve themselves in community activities. Few made attempts to help parent leaders build their parent organizations, and most did not attend community school board meetings where they could have publicly exchanged ideas concerning the education of the children in their districts with parents, community residents, and school board members. The writer had attended many community school board meetings where there were no school administrators in attendance.

There were many parents in the district who were very

young, and who lacked the necessary formal education to obtain financially secure employment. Many of these parents had to work long hours to earn a decent weekly salary. Some had attended school after work in the hopes of eventually earning high school diplomas or college degrees needed for career advancement. There were parents who received public assistance. These parents were unable to work. Other parents had many children for whom they were responsible to raise. Because of their situations, these groups of parents found it very difficult to help their children with their school assignments and to attend their chilldren's schools to talk with their children's teachers.

The educational achievements of the children in the school districts had not been high. Over 50 percent of the students in the districts failed the citywide reading test and over 40 percent of them failed the citywide mathematics test. Educational leaders in the area had not demonstrated a serious concern for improving the scores in their schools and in their school districts. The educators, in the writers school district, had not offered a plan for academic improvement. Also, board members, community residents, and parents had not requested such a plan. At community school board meetings, academic matters were rarely discussed.

There were few rewards for students who did well academically. Some individual schools gave awards to some students for their academic achievements, but these students were not recogized throughout the districts. Many students

who had done poorly in school because they rarely went to school, were given rewards, trips and parties to interest them in attending school. Students who did not have an attendance problem received nothing for being responsible.

The lack of recognition for true scholarship in the districts had made it difficult for many students who did well academically. They were not respected by other students for their successes. This lack of recognition had caused many good students to stop working hard and to start associating with students who did the minimal work needed to pass.

The media of the city pictured the community in which the school districts were located as a slum, where it was dangerous to live. There was a crime problem throughout the city, but the area in which the school districts were located was one of the few areas that was continuously featured as a place which citizens should avoid. This public picture of the area made it more difficult to help raise the self-esteem of the residents of the community.

The Related Literature

When reviewing the literature, the writer learned a great deal from the findings of others. The writer reviewed literature that dealt with the education of African-Americans, with the relationships of students' needs to educational settings, and with parental involvement in the educational process.

Fordham (1988) states that "because the high-achieving

students believe firmly in the 'American Dream,' they willingly, and in some instances not so willingly, seek to distance themselves from the fictive-kinship system in the Black community" (P.80). Her study shows that it is difficult to get black students with great academic potential, who also associate with peers who are not so gifted, to pursue high academic challenges in high school. She points out that for these black students to achieve, they have to become "raceless" (P.67).

When Edelman (1987) states "today the black community is much more diverse and dispersed. We do not all live in the same segregated neighborhoods, go to the same segregated schools, and meet at church on Sunday. Many role models for poor black youth have moved to the suburbs. Black leadership is similarly dispersed" (P.10), she is telling us that most formally educated blacks, a resource that was available to the writer's generation, are not available to today's financially poor black youth.

Rashid (1981) says that the best people to help African-American students achieve success during their early years within the Euro-American educational system are early childhood specialist who were raised in Afro-American communities.

Corder and Quiesenberry (1987) conclude that Afro-American students can better understand and appreciate the values of the Euro-American educational system if they have multicultural experiences during their early childhood.

Irvine (1988), when investigating the reasons for the improvements in a number of African-American schools, found that successful schools had administrators with a vision, who understood the importance of excellent instruction, who could maintain school discipline, and who understood the importance of parents and other members of the community to the running of excellent schools.

Wilkins (1988) told upper and middle income class blacks at Howard University that they must give of their time to work with inner-city black children if these children are to have success. He told his African-American audience that they cannot expect the people of their race to do well if they do not help in the effort. He reminded them that their opportunities to participate in American society was due to the struggles and sacrifices of many who came before them.

Carter & Helms (1988) make the point that because a person is black, does not automatically mean that he or she identifies with blacks or black culture. They also make clear that because some blacks have moved into the middle and upper income classes, it does not follow that they have stopped identifying with the issues that confront financially poor blacks. Their findings have implications concerning the concept that only blacks can educated blacks.

Pollard (1989) concludes that along with the importance of support and encouragement that teachers give their students, they must allow their students to solve problems

so that they can gain a better self-preception. He also points out that schools must be organized to be more supportive of parents' aspirations for their children.

Eshel, Wainbyb, & Shachar (1987) found that students in the open education classes did better in reading than the students in the traditional classes. They found that when students had more freedom to move around and to use materials, they were able to set their own pace in classwork, and were able to initiate their research assignments, they were more motivated to complete assignments. They also found that the open education method gave the students more opportunities to work together.

Pramling (1988) supports the idea that children should be taught metacognitively. Teachers should know what, and how, students think concerning specific content. Also, they should make students aware of the methods the students use to draw conclusions. This style of teaching, she believes, makes specific content more relevant to students.

Erickson (1988) shows that there is a great need for after school programs to care for the many millions of children who are left unsupervised once the school day ends. But even though there is a great need for after school programs, she makes clear that many of the children in need are children who have emotional problems. When school programs are designed, this factor must be taken into account.

Emler, Ohana, & Moscovici (1987) show how children

view schools and teachers. They state that teachers are looked upon as the representatives of school authority, and that schools are organized in a manner to limit their personal choices of behavior. The students understand that schools have a formal structure and a chain of command.

Wihelm and Brooks (1980) state that "mothers appear to have considerable influence on the anxiety towards mathematics felt by the daughters. The same appears to be true of the father/son relationship" (P.14).

Hughes (1988) shows how, as principal of Lee Elementary School, he and the school staff were able to motivate parents to be involved in the education of their children. Students were given rewards for excellent work. The parents at the school raised the funds for the awards. When he went into a classroom and found a student doing work, he immediately called the students' parents on his cordless phone. Positive reinforcement cards were also sent home to parents to tell them of their children's positive deeds.

Sizemore (1988), when evaluating the Madison School in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, found that administrative leadership was the key to school improvement, and that teacher leadership and parent involvement were not important for students to achieve academic success in African-American schools.

Coleman, Rowland & Robinson (1989) state that there is a great need for parents to get involved in the after school programs that their children attend. They also stated that

more research must be done to better understand what effects these programs are having on the students who attend them.

Gerstel (1987) shows that, even though divorce is not looked upon as the evil it once was, divorced people are still stigmatized. The implications of this finding, when viewing the plight of unwed mothers, especially those who are financially poor, leads the writer to believe that there is some contempt for single parents.

Whitehead (1988) felt that young and inexperienced parents needed to have more communication and a closer bonding with day-care personnel at the centers where their children attend. She states that the literature suggests that more mature parents are less dependent on day care personnel to help raise their children.

Moles (1987) indicates that his research suggests that more parents are willing to work with their children at home, than within the school setting. He also states that he found that teachers believe that the parents who work with their children in the school setting are the parents who are more interested in improving the school.

Haynes, Comer & Hamilton-Lee (1988) give the results of the use of their school development program. The components of their plan were the governance and management team, the mental health team, and a number of parent participants. The group was responsible for setting school policy, establishing curricula, staff development, and creating a decent school climate.

Kristensen & Billman (1987) tell of their findings from their working with parents to help them to prepare their children for entrance into kindergarten. Their results indicated that parents can be taught how to help their children prepare to enter school.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Statement of General Goals

During a eight month period, the writer expected to get at least 20 parents to daily interact with their children concerning their school activities.

Behavioral Expectations

The seven following behavioral objectives were attempted during the eight month period of this practicum:

1. To get 75 parents to particpate in a workshop to learn how to best communicate with the teachers of their children, as evidenced by the attendance figures at the workshops, and their participation in completing a questionnaire.

2. To get 75 parents to participate in a reading workshop to learn how to help their children with their reading homework, as evidenced by the attendance figures at the workshops, and their participation in completing a questionnaire.

3. To get 75 parents to participate in a mathematics workshop to learn how to help their children with their mathematics homework, as evidenced by the attendance figures at the workshops, and their participation in completing a questionnaire.

4. To get 20 parents to regularly contact the teachers of their children, as evidenced by the number of parents who worked directly with the writer, using a questionnaire as a guide.

5. To get 20 parents to encourage their children to use the libraries as places to study, as evidenced by the number of parents who worked directly with the writer, using a check list as a guide.

6. To get 20 parents to set up study programs for their children, as evidenced by the number of parents who worked directly with the writer, using a check list as a guide.

7. To get 20 parents to work with their children to help them master the number facts, or the multiplication table, as evidenced by the number of parents who work directly with the writer, using a check list as a guide.

Evaluation Instruments

The first specific objective was to be measured by the attendance figures of parents attending the workshops to learn how to best communicate with the teachers of their children. The writer expected to get seventy-five parents to attend these workshops. The writer issued questionnaires to parents to determine if the workshops were relevent to them and their children (see Appendix C).

The second specific objective was to be measured by the attendance figures of parents attending the reading workshops to learn how to help their children with their reading homework. The writer expected to get seventy-five parents to attend these workshops. The writer issued

questionnaires to parents to determine if the reading workshops were helpful to them and their children (see Appendix D).

The third specific objective was to be measured by the attendance figures of parents attending the mathematics workshops to learn how to help their children with their mathematics homework. The writer expected to get seventy-five parents to attend these workshops. The writer issued questionnaires to determine if the mathematics workshops were helpful to them and their children (see Appendix E).

The fourth specific objective was to be measured by the parents' answers to a questionnaire issued by the writer (see Appendix F). The fifth, sixth and seventh specific objectives were to be measured by direct conversations between the writer and parents. The conversations were to be guided by the use of check lists. (see Appendix G).

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

The writer studied solution strategies that dealt with working with people in workshop settings to help them learn how to better communicate with other members of society. Unger (1990), when discussing group therapy, made the point that conflict among group members is inevitable. Thus, he stated that therapists must "know how to manage conflict stituations"(p.349). Barnard (1990) told of how, after 29 years of being a junior high school counselor, he had to resign his position because his principal would not allow him to get involved in the home problems of his students. He was not allowed to "respond to the family dynamics and struggles..." (p.201).

The writer understood that, because of the many social problems that existed in the community where he lived and worked, and because of the differences in social values between most of the teachers and most of the parents, working with the parents would not be an easy task. Jenkins (1990) made the important point, when discussing family therapy, that therapists must understand that many of the pressures that most financially poor families endure cannot be solved by therapists. He went on to say that even when

therapists felt powerless, they must not give up. The writer shared the belief that as an individual he could not solve the many social and financial problems that were faced by parents. He did believe that by getting parents in contact with the teachers of their children he would have assisted them in building strong parent/teacher communication networks, and that the networks would have placed them in a better position to help their children.

Baptiste (1990) made nine recommendations to family therapists who work with immigrant families having difficulties adjusting to their new environments. Two of the recommendations were of special interest to the writer. He told therapists to "learn about the family's culture from the family" (p.19), and to "help parents and adolescents resolve developmental independencey/dependency issues"(p.20).

Description of Selected Solution

The writer's first solution strategy was to work with parents, starting in workshop settings, to help them to learn how to better communicate with the teachers of their children (see Appendix H). Following the workshops, the writer had hoped to get at least twenty parents to regularly contact the teachers of their children so that they could better their children's educational opportunities. Learning about families from family members had often kept the writer from making errors that would have caused conflict. The writer followed this procedure when he dealt with parents in his workshops. Understanding the culture of the community in

which he lived and worked had also always been helpful to him in performing his teaching duties.

Lantz and Harper (1990) informed readers that "anomic depression is a form of depression which occurs in reaction to a sense of perceived meaninglessness" (p.153). They then informed readers that one method of treating anomic depression within an immigrant family was to develop the social skills of family members so that the family members could take advantage of opportunities that existed in their communities. They believed that the learning of a new language and of new cultural norms were a must if family members were to successfully negotiate their new environments. The writer believed that parents had to understand that the cultural values of most teachers mirrored the cultural values of the leaders of corporate America. By studying the actions of their children's teachers, parents could learn how their children would be expected to conduct themselves when they moved on to further their formal education, or moved into the world of work.

Burges (1976) developed for the Institute for Responsive Education in New Haven, Connecticut a guide to help parents get involved in the improvement of schools. The guide was used to help people learn the importance of defining issues, and to learn how best to communicate their concerns to others. The writer used this guide to organize his workshops. Baron, Baron and Mac Donald (1983) developed a guide to help parents better understand educational

systems. Their book gives parents step-by-step procedures to ready their children for preschool, to test their children to see if they met national norms, to help them to spot social and emotional problems that their children may have had, and to learn how to help their children with their school work. The writer also used their guide to organize his workshops.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Gartner and Lipsky (1987) found that even though parental involvement is supposed to be a part of Public Law 94-142, 70 percent of the parents who had children in special education did not have input in their children's indivdual education plan (IEP). Pyszowski (1989) made the point that economically disadvantaged children lacked many advantages that were enjoyed by children who came from homes "where parents were well educated and economically secure" (p.287). She told of how a program in San Antonio, Texas, called ADVANCE, was created to assist financially poor children by having classes for their parents where the parents could learn parenting skills. The classes met for three hours, once a week, for nine months. The creators of the program believed that by increasing parent self-confidence, parents would be better able to help their children.

Mc Callum, Lerchenmuller and van Putten (1988), when detailing how their inner-city school was able to be turned into an excellent academic school, explained that parents received subject area goals at the beginning of the school

year. Afterwards, every month parents received a newsletter giving information on how to help their children.

Taylor and Pinard (1988) explained how they developed an excellent high school for mainly Afro-American students in Harlem, New York. They told of how they had teachers issue interim student progress reports to parents. Parents also received report cards six times a year. A parent committee at the school had input in the selection of textbooks, and input in the design of curricula.

France and Meeks (1987) told of how a New York City elementary school and a New York City college sponsored a parent assistance program that helped parents to better help their children. The parents, at weekly meetings, spent one hour learning how to teach their children, and then spent another hour teaching their children, while supervised by a team of professionals. While teaching their children, many parents felt they became better readers.

Workshops to get parents involved in the academic activites of their children were also needed in the school area where the writer worked. He hoped that by having academic workshops, he would be able to help parents learn how to build on their children's strengths. He also hoped to help parents build on their strengths.

The writer believed that parents had to become more knowledgeable about the school districts' curricula and about the textbooks that were used. He hoped that by having academic workshops, he would be able to encourage parents

to assist their children with their academic work.

ACADEMIC WORKSHOPS

The writer's second strategy solution was to have workshops for parents where they could better learn how to help their children with their reading homework (see Appendix I). Also, the writer's third strategy solution was to have workshops for parents where they could learn how to help their children with their mathematics assignments (See Appendix J). Following these workshops, the writer had hoped to get at least twenty parents to encourage their children to use libraries as places to study, and he had hoped to get a least twenty parents to help their children master the number facts or the multiplication tables.

Vaccaro (1990) reported that the learning workshops in Chile were used successfully for the last 12 years in keeping community projects in existence after the original participants withdrew from the projects. The continuance of programs was done by using a process called the "transference-appropriation process" (p.64). The process called for the professionals and the community participants to work closely together to find solutions to specific problems. Once solutions were found, the programs were able to be continued without the aid of the professionals.

De Marco (1989) told of how getting local social workers and mental health counselors to work with school personnel to help solve student and family problems, caused by divorce, resulted in positive benefits for the children.

Quintero (1989), after evaluating the San Juan II district collaboration project, concluded that program designers must take into account the strengths of students, and not their weaknesses. It was her belief that curriculum content should be relevent to students. The writer wanted workshop parents to understand that their children brought many strengths to their classrooms, and that these strengths could be built upon.

READING

Sobol and Sobol (1987) instructed parents as to how to evaluate reading programs in grades kindergarten through second. Tom Sobol is the New York State Commissoner of Education, and Harriet Sobol is also an experienced educator. These educators explained to parents that one need not be an expert in the area of education to make sound judgments concerning the quality of early childhood reading programs. They made the point that there are specific activities that are found in excellent early childhood reading programs. Sobol and Sobol listed these activities, grade by grade. The writer used the writings of the Sobols to help parents learn how to help their children with their home reading assignments.

Criscuolo (1984) explained how teachers in the New Haven, Connecticut Public School used parents to assist with the system's reading program. Some parents helped teachers in classroom settings, others helped their children at home, and others helped their children in parent rooms at schools.

Parents in classroom settings were not paid for their work. Some parents worked with teachers on a regular basis, while others worked part-time. Criscuolo, who supervised reading in the school district, believed that parents were meaningful resources for his district.

The writer had planned to use the strengths of parents to make his reading workshops successful. Auerbach (1989) found that a majority of parents, in his study of low-income parents, were literate people who read books, newspapers, or magazines, daily. The writer came in contact with few parents who could not read. It was his belief that no child should have read on a grade level that was less than his or her parents' reading grade levels.

There were people who work at social agencies in the community who could have been of help to the writer in making his workshops successful. The writer had planned to talk with these people to request their help. The writer would have liked parents to have examined the reading textbooks that their children were using, and would have liked parents to have examined the reading curriculum used by the teachers of their children.

Sledd (1988) documented how the literacy crisis had been a part of learning institutions for more than a hundred years. He quoted the 1871 president of Harvard University, George Eliot, to show that the then Harvard President felt that too many of the male students who were then attending the school were not prepared to do college work. During that

period, females were not allowed to attend the school. Sledd did not believe that there was a true literacy crisis. He believed that the tests which examined students' knowledge of English grammar kept many financially poor students from entering the college where he taught. Delpit (1986) said that black educators felt strongly that black students were not taught the technical skills of writing. The writer tried to convince parents that it was important for their children to master English grammar, and that reading could help their children achieve this goal. Whether tests are fair or not fair was not important to the writer's task. The writer advised parents that, until the tests were changed, they had to demand that their children be taught and encouraged to pass the existing examinations.

MATHEMATICS

The mathematics workshops were run in a similar manner to the reading workshops, Garcia (1990) found that "young females and minorities are adequately portrayed in mathematics series" (p.11). The writer used this information when demonstrating to parents how to evaluate textbooks.

Gwizdala and Steinback (1990) found that only one-third of the females in their study were encouraged by their teachers to study mathematics. Most of the females in the study were encouraged to study mathematics by family members. Kloosterman and Gorman (1990) suggested that parents should not tell their children that they won't do well in mathematics because they did not do well in mathematics. They also

suggested that teachers must tell students that they can master mathematics. The writer had planned to advocate that parents encourage their children to work at learning mathematical concepts. He also had planned to teach parents how to help their children to master their number facts and their multiplication tables.

Moses, KamII, Swap, and Howard (1989) write clearly how it is possible to use the organizing methods used in organizing blacks to vote in Mississippi during the 1960's to create an educational atmosphere which fosters the belief that all children can develop mathematical literacy. The writer planned to use the findings of these writers to assist him in organzing his mathematics workshops.

Greabell and Phillip (1990) found that workshops for teachers, where they were taught mathematical concepts by college professors, helped them to better understand the material they were responsible for teaching. With this additional knowledge, they were better able to teach mathmetics to their students. The writer hoped that his workshops with parents would have the same positive results.

Report of Action Taken

The writer organized and taught at workshops to achieve his first three behavioral objectives. He then worked with 11 families to reach his last four behavioral objects. To be invited to give the workshops, from which he drew most of the families to reach the last four objectives, it took many

hours of work and a great deal of patience.

The writer spoke with numerous parent leaders, community leaders, political leaders, religious leaders, and educational leaders to try to get them to help him organize parents for his workshops. Though most of these people stated that the parents of their organizations needed help in learning how to help their children with their academic work, few were helpful to the writer in helping him to organize his workshops. His experiences with them were positive in that their conversations with him reaffirmed his belief that the workshops were needed.

One of the people who was very helpful to the writer was the director of the community college's parent advocacy program. The president of the community college in the area had introduced the writer to her. She invited the writer to be one of two speakers at one of her Saturday parent forums, and the sole speaker at three of the other sessions. From these sessions, which averaged over 50 parents per Saturday, the writer reached the bulk of the participants needed to achieve his first three behavioral objectives.

The first session lasted about 45 minutes. The writer used the time to speak to the parents concerning his practicum, and to explain what the coming workshops would include. The following three workshops dealt with the importance of parents and teachers communicating with each other, the importance of parents helping with the development of their children's reading skills, and the importance of

parents helping with the development of their children's mathematics skills. These workshops started at nine in the morning and ended at noon.

The forums were well attended because parents used the sessions to learn about educating their children, while they waited for their children to complete their African dance or African music lessons. The studio, where the children were taught, was down the hall from the room where the workshops were given.

Another person who was of aid to the writer was one of the counselors at the community college. The writer had known her from a political organization, and he had worked with her on one of the college's committees that dealt with doing research on parenting. She invited the writer to give two workshops to a group of parents she was teaching. The writer gave an hour reading workshop, and an hour mathematics workshop for her students.

The writer was also invited, by a teacher at his school, to give a series of workshops for the parents of the children who played on his basketball and track teams. During the period of the practicum, the writer had completed one workshop that dealt with the importance of parents communicating with the teachers of their children. The writer committed himself to give three additional workshops, and to volunteer some of his time during the coming school year to tutor some of the children on the sports teams.

The writer worked with one of the parent activists in

the area to help her begin to organize parents for his workshops. He had attended one of her meetings and met with some parents who were interested in learning how they could best help their children with their school work. Unfortunately, one of the children of the activist parent was murdered. Her activism then turned to organizing parents to help stop the violence among the youth in the area. She informed the writer that she would begin again the organizing of parents for academic workshops after the summer.

The writer met with a group of parents, at the request of one of the political leaders, to help them write a proposal, to be funded by the city. The parents needed the funds to be able to provide social activities for their children during the summer. The writer encouraged the parents to write into the proposal a section that dealt with their helping the children to better develop their reading and mathematics skills. The writer allowed the parents to use the workshop agenda sheets from his practicum in their proposal. The writer was told by the politician that the parent's proposal was submitted to the city.

A school administrator, who had gotten the writer's name from the director of the parent advocacy center, contacted the writer and asked him if he would do a reading workshop and a mathematics workshop for the parents at his school. He offered to pay the writer. The writer had to decline the offer because the workshops could only be held

during school hours. The writer offered to do the workshops after school hours, for free, but the school administrator declined the offer.

ELEVEN FAMILIES

The writer worked with 11 families, for over five months, for at least an hour a week with each family. The 11 families included 24 adults and 26 children. The adult group consisted of seven males and 17 females, and the children's group consisted of 13 males and 13 females. The children's grade levels ranged from kindergarten to the eighth grade, but the majority of the children were in the early grades, kindergarten through the fourth grade. Following, the writer describes the families and his work with them.

Family A consisted of a mother, a grandmother, one son, and one daughter. The son was in the fifth grade and the daughter was in kindergarten. The writer worked with the family members in their home, at the kitchen table. The writer met the mother of the children at one of his workshops that was given at the parent advocacy center.

The writer's routine was to ask the children about their past week's activities in school and at home. The mother and grandmother would participate in these discussions by asking questions of the children or the writer, and stating experiences that the children had forgotten to mention. After the discussion period, the writer would assist the children with that day,s homework assignments. He would then speak to

the adults, while the children were still at the table, concerning what he felt they should be doing with the children to help them succeed.

This routine was used with every family that he worked with. The discussions varied each week, with each family, but the routines remained constant.

Family B was the first family that the writer worked with. The family consisted of two mothers, a grandmother, and two daughters. The girls were in the first grade and in kindergarten. The writer worked with the mother of the first grader, her daughter, and her mother at the grandmother's apartment. He worked with the other mother, and her daughter at their apartment, a block away. He worked with both mothers, for one hour, twice a week, for over six months.

The writer met the two mothers and the grandmother at one of his workshops at the parent advocacy center. The mother of the first grader had publicly praised the writer on a number of occasions for helping her be more patient with her daughter. The writer also helped her sister prepare for the high school equivalency examination. Family B was very supportive of the writer. The members of this family had encouraged a number of the other families to become part of the writer's practicum.

Family C consisted of a mother, a grandmother who had younger children, a father, a grandfather, and six children. Four of the children were in the fourth grade, one was in the fifth grade and the other was in the seventh grade.

There were two girls and six boys. They lived in a brownstone, with one part of the family living on the first floor, and the other living on the second.

The writer worked with the mother, the grandmother, and the father. The grandfather was present, but he did not participate. The group met in the upstairs apartment, once a week, for an hour.

The students were difficult to work with because they were very unkind to each other. Once the writer asked if they understood the concept of division and they were unable to explain the concept. The grandmother stated that they did not understand the concept because they did not understand sharing with each other. During the period of the practicum, the seventh grader broke his hand hitting one of the fourth graders.

The adults in the family were very interested in the children obtaining a quality education, but they seemed to lack the courage to force the children to study long hours. Another daughter, who had attended one of the workshops at the parent advocacy center, was the person who contacted the writer. She wanted the writer to help her mother and her sister. She was the person who took the boys to music studio every Saturday to study drumming.

Family D was composed of a mother and two sons, one in the second grade and one in kindergarten. The mother was very intense concerning her sons' future educational opportunities. She made sure that they had homework, and she

made sure that they completed their homework. She went up to the school of her children daily.

The writer met the mother at the parent advocacy center. She told the writer that she would be lost for something to do on Saturdays if the parent center had to close because of budget cuts. The writer worked with the family for one hour, once a week.

Family E was made up of a mother, a father, and three children, a boy in the first grade, a boy in the second grade, and a girl in the fifth grade. The writer met the mother at the parent advocacy center. The mother and father worked closely with the writer. When the writer gave the children books to read, the mother read all the books and questioned the children concerning what they had read.

The children called the writer their tutor. The second grader gave the writer a gift of a picture he had drawn. On the picture he wrote "To my tutor...." He also invited the writer to one of his soccer games. The writer attempted to attend, but he could not find the field. The members of this family and the member of family B had planned a picnic celebration for the writer after the game. Unfortunately, the writer missed his surprise picnic celebration.

The writer had met the mother of family F at the parent advocacy center. Her family consisted of her, her husband, and two daughters. After the writer began working with her family, she asked if her sister and her nephew could join the group. The nephew was having serious discipline problems

in school and she felt that the writer could be of help.

The daughters were in kindergarten and the first grade. Their cousin was in the eight grade. The writer worked with the three adults and the three children for two hours, once a week. Working with this family, in a beautiful dining room, made the writer feel as if he was part of the family. At the end of the school year, the writer continued working with the children while they attended summer school to advance themselves. The writer also worked with the older brother of the eighth grader to help him try to get additional grants for his college tuition.

The mother of Family G was the young sister of the grandmother in Family B. She had heard about the writer from her sister, and had contacted him to see if he would help her and her husband to be of better help to their son and their daughter. Their son was in the second grade and their daughter was in kindergarten.

The parents worked well with the writer and their children. He met with the family for an hour and a half, once a week. Both parents worked, and the father attended college in the evenings. The mother worked in another borough, and she would borrow books from the library in that borough. It was not until the writer told her and her husband that the library, in walking distance to their home, was open on Saturday and Sundays that they began to use their neighborhood library.

In Family H there was a mother and two children, a boy

in the seventh grade, and a girl in the fifth grade. The mother met the writer at the parent advocacy center, but she did not ask for his help until she found out that her children were failing in school.

The mother had recently separated from her husband, and she had neglected supervising her children as she had done prior to the separation. The writer met with the family for an hour, once a week.

Family I consisted of a mother, a father, a daughter in the second grade, and a baby girl. The second grader was in the same class as one of the boys in Family E. The writer met the mother at the parent advocacy center. Both parents worked well with the writer and their daughter. Both also asked the writer if he would help them learn how to study to pass the high school equivalency examination. He agreed.

Family J had a mother, a father, a grandmother, an uncle and two children. The daughter was in the first grade and the son was in the second grade. The grandmother met the writer at the home of Family B. She asked if he would assist her, her daughter, and her son-in-law in helping them to better help their children with their school work. He met with the family for an hour, once a week. Sometimes the uncle would sit in during the group discussions.

During the period of the practicum, the mother became ill and had to go into the hospital. When she returned, she did not have the energy to continue with the group. The

grandmother, father, and uncle continued to work with the children. The uncle had asked the writer if he would help him prepare for the high school equivalency examination. The writer agreed.

Family K was made up of a grandfather, a grandmother, a mother, a father and a daughter in the fifth grade. The grandfather was a friend of the writer and he had asked the writer if he would help him and his family to better learn how to help his granddaughter. The writer worked with the family for two hours, once a week at the home of the grandparents. He also helped the grandmother prepare for her college classes.

The grandparents lived in a rough part of the area. Once when leaving their home, the writer encountered some young men gambling in the hall. The grandfather asked them to stop and they did. One of the young men stated that his group was better than the group that usually sold drugs in the hall. A few weeks later, one the young men in the gambling group was murdered in a shooting outside the apartment house.

CLASSROOM PARENTS

The writer worked closely with relatives of five students in his first grade class. Most of these relatives came up to the school at least once a week. When they came, they spoke to the writer.

The relative of the children in Family L was the grandmother. She took care of four of her daughter's children from the end of the school day, until the parents

came home from work. All the children were boys, three were triplets. One of the triplets was in the writer's class. The writer waited to talk to the grandmother each day that she came. The conversations lasted more than ten minutes, and they dealt with what she and the triplet's parents could do to better help the boys in doing advance work. The boys were socially active, and they were academically ahead of most of their classmates. The writer had also spoken to the mother and father more than six times during the time of the praciticum. Both had been former students at the school.

The grandmother of the girl in Family M came up to the school to see about her grandchildren about once, every two weeks. During those times, she visited the writer. At home, the grandmother made sure that her granddaughter did her homework. When her granddaughter claimed that she did not have homework, she would get in contact with the writer. The writer also had a number of phone conversations with the grandmother.

The mother in Family N brought her daughter to school every morning, and would wait until the writer picked up his class. At least once a week she spoke with the writer to see how her child was progressing in class. She was very supportive of the writer with his working with her child, and with his working with the rest of the students.

Toward the end of the school year, the counselor at the writer's school asked the writer to give his opinion of the parent. The writer gave a positive report dealing with her

supervision of her child.

The mother of Family O continuously asked the writer for his ideas on how best she could work with her daughter. She came up the school at least twice a week. The writer helped the mother with ideas, and by giving her academic materials to use with her child. About a month before school ended, the family moved and the writer lost contact with them.

The father, the mother, and the grandmother in Family P kept in contact with the writer concerning the academic advancement of their daughter. They would come up to the school, each at different times, to get verbal reports. When the student did not get homework, a note would be received by the writer the following day. The note would request a reason why the child did not receive homework. On most occasions, homework had been given but the child had not copied the homework assignments.

MEDIA

The writer was able to put out one edition of a newsletter during the period of the practicum. The main section of the newsletter dealt with listing the reading and mathematics scores for the school districts in the entire city. The letter also gave some ideas of how parents could help their children with their schoolwork. About 800 letters were distributed to parents, community residents, and politicians in the area.

The writer appeared for about 20 minuets on a program,

on the Board of Education's television station to explain his practicum. He then arranged for two of the parents from the families that he worked with to be on the program to explain how they felt about the work of the writer. This particular station is said to reach about 250,000 households. The programs were viewed on Saturday mornings, at a time when the major stations viewed comic films. Because of this fact, many of the people who usually watched programs on the major channels, turned on the Board of Education station on Saturday mornings.

The writer attempted to get himself and some parents on a radio program that was sponsored by the community college. He was unable to be scheduled during the period of his practicum, but he was promised some time during the next school year.

The writer also attempted to work with the superintendent of his school district to help put out a school district newspaper. He met with the superintendent on four occasions to work on the project. The writer had taken pictures of eight of the nine school board members to put in the newspaper. Unfortunately, budget cuts became the major concern with the entire school system, and the newspaper project became less of a priority. The newspaper was not published during the period of the practicum.

TOGETHERNESS

The writer initiated a meeting which brought the president of the community college together with the

superintendents from four of the school districts in the area, and the superintendent of the high schools in the area. The superintendent of his district had asked the writer if he could arrange the meeting. The writer spoke to the president about such a meeting, the president thought it would be of great value, and the meeting took place. The writer was unable to attend the meeting because it was held during the morning, on a day that he was teaching.

The writer also arranged a meeting between the president of the community college and some board members and a few politicians from one of the school districts in the area. The writer attended the meeting. From the initial meeting, the president and the people from the school district set up an arrangement where members from the education department at the college worked with staff in the school district to try to get more parents involved in school activities.

During the last two months of the practicum, the writer met continuously with a group of parents to make plans for the next school year. The writer and the parents agreed that he would continue to work with them and their children.

The writer also communicated with the director of the parents advocacy center, concerning the programming for the next school year. The director offered the writer a paid consultant's position, but he refused the position, and volunteer to again do academic workshops. She accepted.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

The writer met his first objective, "During an eight month period, to get 75 parents to participate in a workshop to learn how to best communicate with the teachers of their children, as evidenced by the attendance figures at the workshops, and their participation in completing a questionnaire." The attendance figures kept by the director of the parent advocacy center for the communication workshop held at the center, added to the attendance figures kept by the writer for the other workshops totalled more than eighty people attending the workshops.

Forty-five parents at the communication workshops responded to the writer's questionnaire (see Appendix C). Following is a table of their response.

Table 3

Responses From Parents At Teacher Communication Workshops

Questions	Level of Understanding 4= very well 3= well 2= not too well 1= not at all			
	Number of Parents' Responses			
	4	3	2	1
1. How well can you explain the role of your child's teacher?	8	27	8	2
2. How well can you explain how administrators supervise teachers?	6	15	17	7
3. How well can you explain some of the rights of teachers?	4	13	23	5
4 How well can you explain some of the rights of parents?	12	19	14	0
5. How well will you be able to help your child?	21	24	0	0
6. How well will you be able to communicate with your child's teacher?	19	25	1	0
7. How well will you be able to communicate with the administrator at your child's school?	16	22	7	0
8. How well will you be able to communicate with school board members?	7	26	9	3
9. How well will you be able to communicate with the community superintendent?	9	15	9	11

The writer met his second objective, "During an eight month period, to get 75 parents to participate in a reading workshop to learn how to help their children with their reading homework, as evidenced by the attendance figures at the workshops, and their participation in completing a questionnaire." The attendance figures kept by the director of the parent advocacy center for the reading workshop, added to the figures kept by the college counselor for the reading workshop held for the parents in her class, and the figures kept by the writer at the other reading workshops totalled more than ninety people attending all the workshops.

Forty-three parents at the reading workshops responded to the writer's questionnaire (see appendix D). Following is a table of their response.

Table 4

Responses From Parents At Reading Workshops

Questions	Level of Understanding 4= very well 3= well 2= not too well 1= not at all — Number of parents' Responses 4	3	2	1
1. How well do you understand the need for leisure reading?	28	11	4	0
2. How well do you understand the approaches used in reading?	6	20	17	0
3. How well do you understand the importance of reading to the study of social studies?	15	24	4	0
4. How well do you understand the importance of reading to the study of science?	18	23	2	0
5. How well do you understand the importance of reading to the study of mathematics?	23	16	4	0
6. How well will you be able to help your child become a better reader?	18	25	0	0
7. How well can you explain the sight word method of teaching reading?	11	19	10	3
8. How well can you explain the phonics method of teaching reading?	10	17	16	0
9. How well can you explain the structural analysis method of teaching reading?	3	19	21	0
10. How well do you understand the cloze method of examining students?	7	10	19	7

The writer met his third objective, "During an eight month period, to get 75 parents to participate in a mathematics workshop to learn how to help their children with their mathematics homework, as evidenced by the attendance figures at the workshops, and their participation in completing a questionnaire." The attendance figures kept by the director of the parent advocacy center for the mathematics workshop, added to figures kept by the college counselor for the mathematics workshops held for the parents in her class, and the figures kept by the writer at the other mathematics workshops totalled more than ninety people attending all the workshops.

Forty-six parents at the mathematics workshops responded to the writer's questionnaire (see appendix E). Following is a table of their response.

Table 5

Responses From parents at Mathematics Workshops

Questions	Level of Understanding 4= very well 3= well 2= not too well 1= not at all			
	Number of parents' Responses			
	4	3	2	1
1. How well do you understand the need for your child to study mathematics?	39	6	1	0
2. How well do yo understand the kinds of job opportunities that will exist for people who do well in mathematics?	32	11	2	1
3. How well can you help your child master the number facts?	15	26	5	9
4. How well can you help you child master the multiplication tables?	18	27	1	0
5. How well can you explain what a fraction is ?	13	28	6	0
6. How well can you explain what a common fraction is?	9	29	7	1
	YES		NO	
7. Will you have time to check your child's homework?	46		0	
8. Do you wish to come to another workshop to get more help in learning how to help your child improve his or her mathematics skills?	46		0	

The writer met his fourth objective, "During an eight month period, to get 20 parents to regularly contact the teachers of their children, as evidenced by the number of parents who worked directly with the writer, using a questionnaire as a guide." More than 20 of the adults in the eleven families that the writer worked with in their homes kept in regular contact with the teachers of the children in the home. Also, the writer was in regular contact with the parents of five of the students in his class.

The writer did not meet his fifth objective, "During an eight month period, to get 20 parents to encourage their children to use the libraries as places to study, as evidenced by the number of parents who worked directly with the writer, using a check list as a guide." Most of the parents wanted their children to use the library. But, because of the crime in the streets, they did not want their children out of the house after dark. Also, because of major budget cuts in the city, the hours that the libraries stayed open decreased. This made it more difficult for those parents who worked during the day to use the library.

The writer met his sixth objective, "During an eight month period, to get 20 parents to set up study programs for their children, as evidenced by the number of parents who worked directly with the writer, using a check list as a guide." More than 20 of the adults in the eleven families that the writer worked with in their homes helped set up study programs for their children. They bought extra reading

books and mathematics materials for their children, and they set up specific study schedules for their children. Also, the parents of the five students in the writer's class, whom he spoke with on a regular basis, told him that they had given their children extra work to complete after they had finished their homework assignments, and that they had purchased extra academic materials and games for their children.

The writer met his seventh objective, "During an eight month period, to get 20 parents to work with their children to help them master the number facts, or the multiplication tables, as evidenced by the number of parents who work directly with the writer, using a check list as a guide." More than 20 of the adults in the eleven families that the writer worked with in their homes helped their children to either master their number facts or their multiplication tables. When the writer first started working with these families, most of the young children were counting by using their fingers, and the older children had not mastered their number facts or their multiplication tables. Once the parents began working with them, all the children mastered their number facts, and all the older children mastered their multiplication tables. Four of the second grade students from the families scored in the 90th percentile on the citywide mathematics test.

Conclusion

Organizing the workshops was the most difficult task of

the practicum. When the writer attempted to complete the task, without the help of others, he was not very successful. Once the writer found people from organizations, who had constituents who were looking for the kind of services that the writer was willing to provide, he achieved his workshop objectives.

In these workshops, the writer found that there were parents who were trying to help their children with their schoolwork, and who wanted confirmation that they were using correct procedures. He also found that there were even more parents who wanted to help their children, but who felt that they were incapable of giving their children assistance. The writer was able to give confirmation to the first group of parents, and to convince most of the second group that they could be of great help to their children.

When working directly with the families, the writer was able to demonstrate that parents could be of enormous help to their children. He found that the children in these families were doing poorly in arithmetic because they had not mastered the number facts or the multiplication tables. Once the parents worked with their children to help them memorize the number facts or the multiplication tables, the children improved in mathematics.

The parents also found that the more their children were made to read, the better readers they became. They found that their children had been reading words, without having understood the meaning of what they read. Once the

parents started asking their children to explain what they read, their children spent more time reading and rereading their assignments.

The parents who worked with their children every day found that their children began to follow the schedules that were set up without prompting. These parents also found that the routines forced them and their children to act in a more orderly manner. The writer observed that as the children did better in school, the better they were treated at home. As they did better, their parents began to trust them more, and their parents began to feel less anxious about them when they were away from home.

The students in the writer's first grade class, whose parents were in regular contact with the writer, did much better in school than the students whose parents seldom contacted the writer. From the writer's view, the common denominator in the practicum that caused the children to have successful academic experiences was the concern of their parents. When the parents made school success a priority, their children did well in school. When the parents demanded that their children do their homework, their children did well in school. When the parents helped their children with their schoolwork, their children did well in school. The children in the families that the writer worked with, and the children in the writer's class looked for direction from their parents. When the directions they received was positive, the children acted in a positive

manner. When the directions they received was negative, the children acted in a negative manner.

Many of the parents who attended the workshop were concerned about their personal growth. They looked at the workshops as places where they gained new knowledge. Many of them were either working on their high school diplomas or on college degrees. Friedman (1980) issued a handbook for black families. The writer recommended this book to the parents. He hoped that the guide would be a beginning for the parents to start studying about families.

The parents who participated in the practicum believed that education would help their children and themselves. It was easy working with them because they shared similar values as the writer. The writer did not work with the children of the unconcerned parents. What can be done for them cannot be answered by this practicum. This practicum dealt with parents who were looking for specific kinds of help. They knew what they wanted. They wanted their children to be well educated.

Recommendations

From the results of the practicum, the writer makes six recommendations. First, superintendents and principals should recruit volunteers to help children to master their number facts and their multiplication tables. Financially poor parents cannot afford tutors, and many of them need help. Second, Community organizations, such as churches and political clubs, should encourage their members to work with

children who are part of their communities. Third, principals should plan for students to have at least three, 45 minutes periods of reading each week. Children have to learn how to sit down and study. This activity can be learned in the classroom. Fourth, reading and mathematics workshops should be planned with follow up activities. Fifth, teachers and counselors should be given extra compensation to work with parents after school hours. If teachers were to call parents twice monthly, to talk positively about their students, parents would be more helpful. Sixth, educators must become more public relations conscious. They must promote the good things that are happening in their schools. This will help to negate much of the bad publicity that public schools are presently receiving.

Dissemination

The results of this practicum was shared with some of the community school board members from two of the school districts in the area where the writer worked. They were also shared with the community college president in the area, the teacher in charge of the teachers' center at the writer's school, the director of the parents' advocacy center where the writer held some workshops, and with the counselor at the community college who allowed the writer to work with the parents in her class.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONS TO TEACHERS
TO DOCUMENT PROBLEM

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

	YES	NO
1. Do most of your students complete their homework?	___	___
2. Did most of your students pass the city's mathematics examination?	___	___
3. Did most of your Students pass the city's reading examination?	___	___
4. Do the parents of most of your students help their children with their homework?	___	___
5. Do you want the parents of your students to help the children with their homework?	___	___
6. Do you think there should be workshops to teach parents how they can create academic environments in their homes?	___	___
7. Do you think there should be workshops to teach parents how to help their children with their reading?	___	___
8. Do you think there should be workshops to teach parents how to help their children with their arithmetic?	___	___
9. Are you aware of the opportunities that exist in the district for your students (trips, afternoon programs, etc.)?	___	___
10. Do you think the district should have a monthly newspaper to inform people of what is happening in the district?	___	___

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONS TO PARENTS TO DOCUMENT PROBLEM

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

	YES	NO
1. Do you know the educational philosophy of the principal at your child's school?	___	___
2. Have you read the educational plan being implemented at you child's school?	___	___
3. Do you know the teacher's educational objectives for you child?	___	___
4. Does your child get daily homework assignments?	___	___
5. Do you believe there is a need for you to learn how to help your child with his or her homework?	___	___
6. Would you like to attend workshops where you can learn how to help your child with his or her assignments?	___	___
7. Would you attend workshops on Saturday?	___	___
8. Would you like the school district to publish a newspaper?	___	___
9. Would you help in putting the newspaper together and with its distribution?	___	___

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONS TO PARENTS TO CHECK
RELEVENCE OF COMMUNICATION WORKSHOPS

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARTICIPANTS
IN TEACHER COMMUNICATION WORKSHOP

4= very well
3= well
2= not too well
1= not at all

1. How well can you explain the role of your child's teacher?	4	3	2	1
2. How well can you explain how administrators supervise teachers?	4	3	2	1
3. How well can you explain some of the rights of teachers?	4	3	2	1
4. How well can you explain some of the rights of parents?	4	3	2	1
5. How well will you be able to help your child become a better student?	4	3	2	1
6. How well will you be able to communicate with your child's teacher?	4	3	2	1
7. How well will you be able to communicate with the administrators at your child's school?	4	3	2	1
8. How well will you be able to communicate with school board members?	4	3	2	1
9. How well will you be able to communicate with the community superintendent?	4	3	2	1

Parent's Name:_____

Address:_____

Telephone Number:_____Child's School_____

APPENDIX D

QUESTIONS TO PARENTS TO CHECK
RELEVENCE OF READING WORKSHOPS

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARTICIPANTS
IN READING WORKSHOP

4= very well
3= well
2= not too well
1= not at all

1. How well do you understand the need for leisure reading?	4	3	2	1
2. How well do you understand the approaches used to teach reading?	4	3	2	1
3. How well do you understand the importance of reading to the study of social studies?	4	3	2	1
4. How well do you understand the importance of reading to the study of science?	4	3	2	1
5. How well do you understand the importance of reading to the study of mathematics?	4	3	2	1
6. How well will you be able to help your child become a better reader?	4	3	2	1
7. How well can you explain the sight word method of teaching reading?	4	3	2	1
8. How well can you explain the phonics method of teaching reading?	4	3	2	1
9 How well can you explain the structural analysis method of teaching reading?	4	3	2	1
10. How well do you understand the cloze method of examining students?	4	3	2	1

Parent's Name:_____

Address:_____

Telephone Number:_____Child's School_____

APPENDIX E

QUESTIONS TO PARENTS TO CHECK
RELEVENCE OF MATHEMATICS WORKSHOPS

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARTICIPANTS
OF MATHEMATICS WORKSHOP

4 = very well
3 = well
2 = not too well
1 = not at all

1. How well do you understand the need for your child to study mathematics?	4 3 2 1
2. How well do you understand the kinds of job opportunities that will exist for people who do well in mathematics?	4 3 2 1
3. How well can you help your child master the number facts?	4 3 2 1
4. How well can you help your child master the multiplication tables?	4 3 2 1
5. How well can you explain what a fraction is?	4 3 2 1
6. How well can you explain what a common fraction is?	4 3 2 1

	YES	NO
7. Will you have time to check your child's homework?	_____	_____
8. Do you wish to come to another workshop to get more help in learning how to help your child improve his or her mathematics skills?	_____	_____

Parent's Name:_____

Address:_____

Telephone Number:_____

Child's School_____

APPENDIX F

QUESTIONS TO PARENTS TO CHECK
RELEVENCE OF PARENT/TEACHER CONTACTS

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS WHO HAD REGULAR CONTACT WITH TEACHERS

1. How many times did you have contact with you child's teacher by phone? _____

2. How many times did you send notes to your child's teacher? _____

3. How many times did you visit your child's teacher? _____

4. How many times were you in contact with the school administrator at your child's school? _____

5. How many times did teacher contact you? _____

6. How many times did the school administrator contact you? _____

7. How many times a week did you check you child's homework? _____

8. How many times a week did you help you child with his or her homework? _____

9. Did your child's reading score improve since last year? yes no

10. Did your child's mathematics score improve since last year? yes no

11. Did your child receive better grades on his or her report card since you have been in contact with the teacher? yes no

Parent's Name:_____

Address:_____

Telephone Number:_____Child's School_____

APPENDIX G

CHECK LISTS FOR PARENTS

CHECK LIST FOR PARENTS WHO
ENCOURAGED THEIR CHILDREN TO USE THE LIBRARY

1. Did your child get a library card? yes no

2. Did you get a library card? yes no

3. How many times did you take your child to the library? _____

4. How many times did your child go to the library alone? _____

5. How many times did your child borrow books from the library? _____

6. How many times did you borrow books from the library? _____

7. How many times did your child use the library to study? _____

8 How many times did you work with your child at the library? _____

9. Did you find using the library very helpful, helpful, or not too helpful? _____

10. Did you feel very strongly, strongly, or not too strongly that your child enjoyed working at the library? _____

11. Did you feel very strongly, strongly, or not too strongly that your child enjoyed reading the books he or she borrowed from the library? _____

12. Did you feel very strongly, strongly or not too strongly that your child's reading improved because he or she began to use the library? _____

Comments:_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Parent's Name_____

Child's School_____

CHECK LIST FOR PARENTS WHO SET UP
HOME STUDY PROGRAMS FOR THEIR CHILDREN

1. Did you help your child with his or her homework in the following subjects:

   mathematics_____ reading_____ science_____

   social science_____ writing_____

2. What other subject did you teach your

   child?_____

3. What books did you use to help your child?

   textbooks_____ self-teaching manuals_____ others_____

4. How many hours a day did you set aside for your child to study? _____

5. How many hours a week did you allow your child to watch television? _____

6. What area in the house was set aside for study?

   _____

7. Do you believe strongly or moderately or not at all that most parents can help their children?

   _____

8. Do you believe strongly or moderately that your child enjoyed your help?

   _____

9. Did you get much help from you child's teacher? yes no

Comments:_____

_____

_____

Parent's Name_____

Address_____

Telephone Number_____Child's School_____

CHECK LIST FOR PARENTS WHO WORKED WITH
THEIR CHILDREN TO HELP THEM LEARN THE
NUMBER FACTS OR THE MULTIPLICATION TABLES

1. Did you work with your child to help him or her learn the number facts? yes no

2. Did you work with your child to help him or her learn the multiplication tables? yes no

3. How many times a week did you work with your child? _____

4. Did your child learn the number facts very well, well, or not too well? _____

5. Did your child learn the multiplication tables very well, well, or not too well? _____

6. Was working with your child easy, not to easy, or difficult? _____

7. Did you help your child with other assignments? yes no

8. Did you child like you working with him or her very much, some, not too much? _____

Comments:_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Parent's Name_____

Child's School_____

APPENDIX H

WORKSHOP AGENDA
BETTER COMMUNICATIONS WITH TEACHERS

I. Teacher Relationships in School Setting

- A. With Students
  1. formal
  2. informal
- B. With School Administration
  1. formal
  2. informal
- C. With District Administration
  1. formal
  2. informal
- D. With School Board Members
  1. formal
  2. informal
- E. With Union Representatives
  1. formal
  2. informal

II. Importance of Homework

- A. Students' Responsibilities
- B. Parents' Responsibilities
- C. Students Developing Good Work Habits
- D. Students Learning to work independently
- E. Parents Developing Communication Networks With Teachers

III. Importance of Teacher Contacts

- A. Notes
- B. Telephone Conversations
- C. Visitations

IV. Importance of Attending Parent Association Meetings

A. Meet With Other Parents

B. Meet School Administrators

C. Help to Better School's Academic Atmosphere

D. Demontration of Concern For School

V. Importance of Attending School Board Meetings

A. Meet With Parent From Other Schools

B. Meet With District Administrators

C. Help to Better School District's Academic Atmosphere

D. Meet With Individual School Board Members

APPENDIX I

AGENDA FOR READING WORKSHOP

I. Importance of Reading

A. Leisure Time

B. Future Employment

C. Skill Needed Further Education

D. Helps Build Self-esteem

II. Teaching Styles of Reading Teachers

A. Phonics

B. Structural Analysis
   1. prefixes
   2. suffixes
   3. roots

C. Sight Words

D. Pre-reading Activities

E. Expectations

F. From Talking To Reading

III. Examinations

A. National

B. Teacher Made

C. From Text

D. Percentile Rankings

E. Meaning of Grade Level

IV. Reading and Other Sugjects
   1. social studies
   2. Science
   3. mathematics
   4. art
   5. sports

V. School Reading Text 87
A. Reading in a Class
1. oral
2. silent
3. testing for comprhension

B. Reading at Home
1. place to read
2. helping with reading assignments

VI. Library Use
A. In School

B. In Neighborhood
1. place to study
2. taking out of books

C. Need For Encouragement

APPENDIX J

AGENDA FOR MATHEMATICS WORKSHOP

I. Importance of the Study of Mathematics

A. Present Accomplishments
   1. learn to follow rules
   2. learn to do daily assignments

B. Future Accomplishments
   1. jobs in technical areas
   2. learning to use the computer
   3. protecting financial interest
   4. help in further study

C. America's Needs
   1. doctorates in mathematics are going to students from other countries
   2. workers needed for america's industrial growth

D. Examinations.
   1. national
   2. local
   3. percentile ranking
   4. true grade level

II. Mastery of Number Facts

A. Explaining Number Facts

B. Memorizing Number Facts

C. How Parents Can Help

III. Mastery of Multiplication Tables

A. Explaining the Multiplication Tables

B. Memorizing the Multiplication Tables

C. How Parents Can Help

IV. Understanding Fractions

A. Decimal Fractions

B. Percent Fractions

C. Common Fractions

V. Common Fractions

A. Function of Numerator

B. Function of Division Line

C. Function of Denominator